

900,000 newly laid-off Americans in 1 week alone.

Senators on both sides know what we need to do. In the springtime, when the country needed a bridge, we passed the largest rescue package in American history on a unanimous, bipartisan basis. Now what Americans need is another bridge. Fortunately, this time we do not need a bridge over an unknown and frightening future but a bridge through the next several months, while the lifesaving vaccines can flow throughout our country.

Frontline healthcare workers are receiving the vaccine as we speak. Yesterday, Vice President PENCE, Speaker PELOSI, and I all received first doses of vaccines pursuant to preexisting plans for the continuity of our government.

These vaccines are safe. They are effective. They are our Nation's path out of this hellish chapter. So the first lines of the cavalry are already arriving. We just need to help American families hold on while reinforcements continue to pour in: more paycheck protection loans for the hardest hit businesses, more additional Federal unemployment aid, more direct assistance for families, a lot more funding for K-12 schools to reopen safely and get our kids' educations back on track, and, perhaps most important of all, a huge amount of funding for vaccine distribution so that we aren't just helping Americans endure this battle, but we are helping them win the battle as fast as possible.

GOVERNMENT FUNDING

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, last night, we extended government funding for 2 additional days. The Senate and the House need to finalize another rescue package containing all the policies I just named and many more. We need to finalize government funding legislation for next year, and we need to pass these measures with a big, bipartisan vote and get them signed into law without further delay.

We need cooperation and focus from all sides. There is a kind of gravitational pull here in Congress, where, unless we are careful, any major negotiation can easily slide into an unending catalogue of disagreements. Let's guard against that.

The American people have already waited for more assistance longer than they could afford. In my judgment, they have waited far too long for a relief package of the same general size and scope that Senate Republicans have been proposing literally since last summer. Every one of us in the Senate and the House represent American families who simply cannot wait any longer for Congress to conclude these discussions. Every day that we delay may very well cost more small businesses their survival, cost more American workers their jobs, and, yes, cost more Americans their very lives.

We have had productive discussions this week. I appreciate the good-faith

spirit that has characterized my talks with the Democratic leader, Speaker PELOSI, Leader MCCARTHY, and Secretary Mnuchin, but the American people cannot feed their families or pay their bills with Congress's good-faith discussions. They need us to act. We need to conclude our talks, draft legislation, and land this plane.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk shall report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Thompson Michael Dietz, of New Jersey, to be a Judge of the United States Court of Federal Claims for a term of fifteen years.

Mr. MCCONNELL. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The Democratic leader is recognized.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, ever since a remarkable bipartisan rescue package in March, the CARES Act, and a subsequent bill to replenish those programs, getting further aid to the American people has been a long and arduous effort. It is no secret that for much of the year, our Republican colleagues were opposed to spending any more money to help the American people during a once-in-a-century pandemic. Thankfully, the Republican leadership recently accepted the bipartisan Gang of 8's framework as the basis for negotiations for an emergency bill, which Speaker PELOSI and I have suggested, unlocking the current round of talks.

Even now, at the end of this painstaking process, there have been some final hurdles. Crafting a \$1 trillion relief package over the matter of a few days was always going to have its difficulties, but we are running out of time.

After passing yet another continuing resolution yesterday evening, we have

until Sunday at midnight to secure a final agreement, draft the legislation, and move it through both Chambers of Congress with alacrity. I agree with the Republican leader on this: We need to deliver an outcome and deliver it quickly.

We continue to make progress. I believe there is good faith from all four corners of congressional leadership to finalize an agreement very soon. Even though there are several issues that haven't been closed out yet, we continue to make good progress on all issues but one.

The No. 1 outstanding issue is a proposal by the Republican Senator from Pennsylvania. This proposal is a new entrant. It hadn't been an important feature of our negotiations over the past few weeks. Only in the past few days have Senator TOOMEY and Senator MCCONNELL introduced this specific provision and made it clear they feel strongly about it.

Senator TOOMEY's new proposal would potentially prohibit the Treasury and the Fed from setting up new emergency lending facilities moving forward, greatly reducing their ability to respond to economic crises. Again, this is something that materialized only in the past few days and would leave the Treasury and the Fed with less authority than it had even prior to the pandemic.

Quite simply, Senator TOOMEY's proposal would do more than just prevent the next Treasury Secretary and Fed Chair from using the emergency lending programs that saved our economy and stabilized markets back in March and April. It could potentially prevent them from setting up new facilities that look, or even smell like, those programs moving forward.

Democrats do not agree with it. Economists from across the political spectrum warned that Senator TOOMEY's legislation would cripple our government's ability to respond to a deteriorating economy. The Chair of the Federal Reserve, Jay Powell, hardly a flaming liberal, is likewise strongly opposed to the Toomey provision.

Senator TOOMEY's proposal goes way beyond what Leader MCCONNELL proposed in his HEALS Act. The worry that this Toomey proposal is supposed to address is the need to prevent the Treasury and Fed from using their authority willy-nilly to do whatever the new President wanted. That worry is unfounded. In order to create a new emergency facility under the present law, you would need the support of Chairman Powell, a conservative man, and the five members of the Fed Board, a conservative body.

Under current law, an emergency lending facility could get approval only in a true emergency. Senator TOOMEY's legislation creates barriers to emergency lending that go far beyond current law and tries to solve a problem that doesn't exist.

Publicly, Senator TOOMEY—I read an article in POLITICO—has expressed his

concern only about winding down the emergency lending facilities established in the CARES Act. If that is what he is genuinely concerned about, there is a path to compromise. But his proposal goes much further and includes prohibitions on the Treasury and the Fed's authority that would handicap our recovery efforts moving forward—not just during this crisis but any future crisis. We cannot agree to that, nor is it what the Senator from Pennsylvania says he cares about. What he is proposing is not about COVID or helping the American people; it is about tying the hands of the next Treasury Secretary and the next Fed Chairman in a true emergency. So I hope our Republican friends can agree to compromise here. Senator TOOMEY's legislation is the only significant hurdle to completing an agreement, and Republicans need to make a decision.

We are quickly approaching an all-or-nothing situation. Everybody needs to make a decision about whether we are going to pass this much needed relief or not and about eleventh hour demands and whether they are worth holding up the entire bill.

We made great strides and great progress over a few days. You can use whatever football analogy you want—we are on the 5-yard line or the 1-yard line or whatever. The truth is simple: We are close to an agreement, but we need to finalize it. We need to finalize it, and only the Toomey provision stands in the way.

We are ready to deliver a desperately needed extension to the historic unemployment benefits the Democrats secured in March; direct survival checks to millions of American families on the brink of financial collapse; crucial relief to our schools, our small businesses, and our healthcare system; and funding to support the production and distribution of a vaccine.

If we do our jobs, we will deliver the second largest Federal stimulus in our Nation's history, second only to the CARES Act earlier this year. It is still not as large or as comprehensive as the country needs or as our side wants, but it will be larger than even the Recovery Act, called ARRA, in the wake of the last financial crisis.

We have given ourselves already an extension to finish our work. Let's not ask for another one. It is time for a conclusion. We have 2 days to cross the t's, dot the i's, and come to an agreement. The country expects us to finish our work and deliver a result for the American people.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. JOHNSON). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the mandatory quorum call be waived.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Thompson Michael Dietz, of New Jersey, to be a Judge of the United States Court of Federal Claims for a term of fifteen years.

Mitch McConnell, Chuck Grassley, Mike Crapo, Shelley Moore Capito, John Cornyn, Cindy Hyde-Smith, Steve Daines, Mike Lee, Ron Johnson, Thom Tillis, Richard Burr, Pat Roberts, Cory Gardner, Tom Cotton, John Boozman, John Hoeven, Lindsey Graham.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on the nomination of Thompson Michael Dietz, of New Jersey, to be a Judge of the United States Court of Federal Claims for a term of fifteen years, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the Senator from North Carolina (Mr. BURR), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI), the Senator from Iowa (Ms. ERNST), the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER), the Senator from Georgia (Mrs. LOEFFLER), the Senator from Kentucky (Mr. PAUL), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE), the Senator from Ohio (Mr. PORTMAN), the Senator from Idaho (Mr. RISCH), and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS).

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 50, nays 37, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 275 Ex.]

YEAS—50

Alexander	Graham	Menendez
Barrasso	Grassley	Moran
Blackburn	Hassan	Murkowski
Booker	Hawley	Roberts
Boozman	Hoeven	Romney
Braun	Hyde-Smith	Rosen
Capito	Inhofe	Rubio
Cassidy	Johnson	Sasse
Collins	Kelly	Scott (FL)
Cornyn	Kennedy	Scott (SC)
Cotton	King	Shelby
Cramer	Lankford	Sinema
Crapo	Lee	Sullivan
Daines	Manchin	Thune
Gardner	McConnell	

Tillis	Warner	Wicker
Toomey	Whitehouse	Young

NAYS—37

Baldwin	Gillibrand	Sanders
Bennet	Heinrich	Schatz
Blumenthal	Hirono	Schumer
Brown	Jones	Shaheen
Cantwell	Kaine	Smith
Cardin	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Carper	Leahy	Tester
Casey	Markey	Udall
Coons	Merkley	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Murphy	Warren
Duckworth	Murray	Wyden
Durbin	Peters	
Feinstein	Reed	

NOT VOTING—13

Blunt	Fischer	Portman
Burr	Harris	Risch
Cruz	Loeffler	Rounds
Enzi	Paul	
Ernst	Perdue	

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote, the yeas are 50, the nays are 37.

The motion is agreed to.

The Senator from Texas.

CORONAVIRUS

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, as we all know by now, yesterday brought even more great news on the vaccine front. The FDA has now issued an emergency approval for a second COVID-19 Vaccine. This one will be developed by the American biotech company Moderna and millions of doses will be distributed across the country. I should say millions more doses will be distributed across the country in the coming days.

As we know, the first vaccine approved, which was created by Pfizer and BioNTech, was approved just over a week ago, and already thousands of healthcare workers have been vaccinated. In my State, we expect a million people—a million Texans—to be vaccinated by the end of this month, which is a remarkable achievement and one we ought to celebrate.

Both of these vaccines will be extraordinarily effective, estimated to be 95 percent effective. If you think about the seasonal flu vaccine, for example, it is, generally speaking, no more than 60 percent effective and many times far less. So 95 percent represents an amazing accomplishment. So the American people have every reason to be optimistic about our ability to put this virus in the rearview mirror, once and for all.

As we now know, the first round of Pfizer vaccines were sent to major hospitals across the country, including more than 100 in my State. Unfortunately, rural areas were almost entirely excluded. This is largely because of the infrastructure required to use the Pfizer vaccine, which must be kept at a negative 94 degrees Fahrenheit, which is significantly colder than the average freezer. While you are likely to find these ultra-low-temperature freezers in major hospitals and major research labs, they are far less likely to be found in smaller, rural hospitals. So when the first round of Pfizer vaccines went out the door, they were only sent to hospitals with the necessary equipment and a large number of workers who needed the vaccine. As a result,